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Date. 3 Jul

Item No. 3

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111A234

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URGENT

APMS-AMS

SUBMARINE COLLISION 160

SAN DIEGO, CALIF. (AP) - AN ARMED SOVIET BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE AND A U.S. NUCLEAR SUB COLLIDED ALMOST HEAD ON IN RUSSIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS LAST YEAR; THE SAN DIEGO EVENING TRIBUNE SAID THURSDAY.

THE NEWSPAPER, IN A COPYRIGHT STORY, SAID THE SAN DIEGO-BASED PINTADO WAS IN THE PACIFIC AS PART OF A NAVY-CIA OPERATION DESIGNED TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE AND TEST RUSSIAN MILITARY CAPABILITIES.

IN WASHINGTON, A NAVY SPOKESMAN DECLINED COMMENT ON THE REPORT.

BOTH SUBS WERE ARMED WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT THE TIME OF THE UNDERWATER COLLISION IN MAY 1974; THE NEWSPAPER SAID. ALTHOUGH NO CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED AMONG THE 107 CREWMEN OF THE PINTADO, THE EVENING TRIBUNE SAID IT WAS UNABLE TO LEARN IF ANY OF THE ESTIMATED 120 MEN ABOARD THE RUSSIAN SUB WAS HURT.

THE SOVIET CRAFT "BLEW ITS BALLAST TANKS AND SURFACED WITHIN 30 SECONDS," THE STORY SAID.

NO FORMAL PROTESTS WERE MADE BUT TOP U.S. CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS REPORTEDLY WERE BRIEFED; THE TRIBUNE SAID.

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The attached adds to referent item.

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7-RMS-PMS-

7COLLISION ADD 270

7SAN DIEGO SUBMARINE COLLISION A234 ADD: TRIBUNE SAID.

THE TRIBUNE QUOTED A SPOKESMAN FOR THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AS SAYING HE WAS NOT AWARE OF SUCH A COLLISION; BUT HE DID NOT DENY THE REPORT.

THE SOVIET SPOKESMAN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING: "A LOT OF CIRCUMSTANCES COULD BE INVOLVED; PARTICULARLY ON WHETHER OR NOT IT HAPPENED IN TERRITORIAL WATERS."

THE SAN DIEGO NEWSPAPER SAID:

"THE PINTADO WAS CRUISING SUBMERGED AT A DEPTH OF ABOUT 200 FEET IN THE SEA APPROACHES TO THE SOVIET NAVAL BASE AT PETROPAVLOVSK ON THE KAMCHATKA PENINSULA.

"ITS SONAR LISTENING DEVICES FAILED TO DETECT THE APPROACH OF A SOVIET YANKEE-CLASS BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINE. THE TWO UNDERSEA CRAFT COLLIDED VIRTUALLY HEAD-ON."

UNIDENTIFIED AMERICAN SUBMARINERS WHO WERE "AWARE OF THE PINTADO INCIDENT" WERE QUOTED AS SAYING IT WAS CLOSE ENOUGH TO PETROPAVLOVSK AT TIMES TO STUDY INNER HARBOR ACTIVITIES THROUGH ITS PERISCOPES.

AN AIDE TO SEN. JOHN STENNIS, D-MISS., CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, "INDICATED KNOWLEDGE OF THE INCIDENT;" THE TRIBUNE SAID.

THE PINTADO, COMMISSIONED IN 1971, IS ONE OF THE STURGEON CLASS OF SILENT-RUNNING SUBS DESIGNED TO DETECT AND FIGHT ENEMY SUBS. IT REPORTEDLY HAS CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR TORPEDOES AND NUCLEAR-WARHEAD ROCKETS WHICH CAN BE FIRED THROUGH A TORPEDO TUBE.

THE ROCKETS BREAK THE SURFACE AND FLY TOWARD A HOSTILE SUB.

THE SAN DIEGO EVENING TRIBUNE SAID SUBMARINERS HAVE BEEN AWARE "THE PINTADO AND OTHER U.S. SUBMARINES ARE OPERATING FREQUENTLY IN SOVIET TERRITORIAL WATERS BECAUSE RUSSIAN SUBMARINES ARE OPERATING OFF THE U.S. COAST."